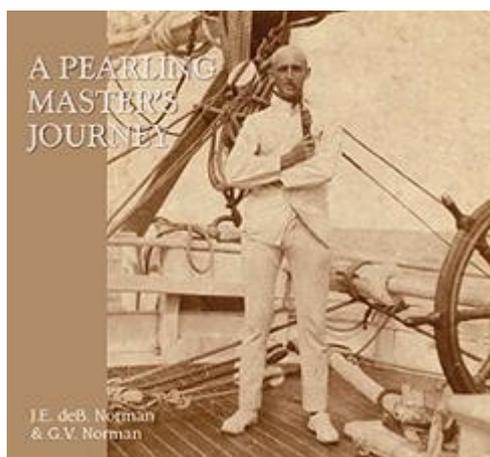


Kimberley Society



Book Note

***A Pearling Master's Journey in the wake of the schooner Mist* by J E deB Norman and G V Norman. Private publication, Strathfield (NSW), 2007, 338 pages, illustrated, including colour plates and maps. ISBN 9 7809803581 0 0, RRP \$100.**

Everyone who attended the talk presented by Kimberley Society members John and Verity Norman in August 2006 should be able to envisage the quality of this book. As was the case with the Normans' superb PowerPoint presentation, the book contains numerous sepia images of people, boats, and historical scenes. Sourced from the Norman Archive, other private collections, repositories, and the descendants of people mentioned in the book, the images cover multiple facets of Broome's history as a pearling port. The text complements the images nicely and provides fascinating insights into pearling, life in the port, race relations, wartime events, and the experiences of individual family members, their friends and associates.

An unsolicited comment from another of our members—Peter Bridge, the founder of Hesperian Press—sums up the book: “It really is magnificent. Dedication and a great subject have resulted in one of the best I have seen for a long time.”

A Pearling Master's Journey begins with Hugh Davis Norman (John's grandfather) joining J W B Robison in a new pearling venture and, in 1887, sailing to places that included Roebuck Bay. We learn that John's father, Edgar deBurgh (Ted) Norman, arrived in Broome in 1910, served with the 10th Light Horse from 1915 to 1919, and then returned to Broome. He married Rene Nicholson of Perth in 1925, and she, too, went to Broome. Each of those people posthumously contributed their stories and impressions to the book, and those contributions gave John and Verity an edge that many other authors will envy. But much more than access to previously unpublished material is required to produce a good book.

In this instance, the authors have blended the first-hand impressions with information and images gleaned from many other sources. In the chapter titled 'A Pearler's Wife', for example, Verity supplements her mother-in-law's handwritten manuscript about life in Broome by drawing on sources that include the newspaper known as the *Nor-West Echo*. We thus learn that the Dampier Orchestral Society contributed to the town's cultural life in the 1920s, and, courtesy of a privately owned photograph, we see the ten men and two women who provided the music in 1923. Like many other photographs in the book, the image has names for the people it shows.

The historical material in the book ends with coverage of the Broome air raid and events at Carnot Bay in 1942. Ted Norman was still in Broome when the Japanese attacked the town and, by interspersing his comments with those of others, the book conveys vivid impressions of that time. Of particular interest are the accounts written by people who survived the horrific air raid of 3 March 1942.

It is in looking at the fine detail in this book and, in particular, at the credits on the photographs, that one comes to appreciate the breadth of the research that went into it. The acknowledgments at the back of the book are comprehensive and give further insight into both the research and the extent to which John and Verity, like the Normans before them, have become part of the Broome community.

A Pearling Master's Journey is available from specialist bookstores and, with the payment of an additional \$10 for postage and handling, it can be purchased [online](#).

Cathie Clement